Speci»S clothing and equipments for soldier at Siachen

3909. SHRIVIJAY J. DARDA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

whether Government is aware that soldiers on the Siachen glacier are facing extreme hardship because of the army's repeated failure to provide them with special clothing and the equipment required to endure nature's fury at heights of over 21,000 feet;

if so, the facts and details thereof;

whether Government have taken/propose to provide special benefits and facilities to soldiers posted at the Siachen glacier; and

if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY): (a) and (b) The soldiers posted at Siachen are being provided special clothing and equipment as per authorization. A total of 55 items of Special Clothing, Ski and Mountaineering Equipment are authorized to the troops posted at locations characterized by extreme cold climate conditions, including the Siachen Glacier. The quantities authorized in respect of these items have been increased by the Ministry of Defence in April 2005. After the increase, 27351 sets of equipment, and an equal quantity as reserve for contingencies, are authorized.

(c) and (d) Improvements in special benefits and facilities to soldiers posted at Siachen Glacier is an ongoing process. Armed Forces personnel posted in delineated areas of Siachen as on date receive 'Siachen Allowance' at the rate of Rs. 7000 per month for officers and Rs. 4667 per month for Personnel Below Officers Rank. The allowance is concurrently available with 'Highly Active Field Area Allowance', the rates of which vary from Rs. 1620 per month (For Naik/Sepoy & equivalent) to Rs. 4200 per month (For Lt. Col. and above). The personnel posted in Siachen Glacier are also authorized special ration, etc.

Cold wave beyond January, 2008

3910. SHRI RAJKUMAR DHOOT: Will the Minister of EARTH SCIENCES be pleased to state:

whether it is a fact that cold wave continued beyond January 2008 in parts of North India;

if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor;

the States and Union Territories badly affected by cold wave and number of persons died of cold therein;

wheher any compensation is proposed to be paid by Government to families of those died of cold wave;

if so, details thereof; and

if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF EARTH SCIENCES (SHRI KAPIL SIBAL): (a) to (c) Yes Sir. There were two major cold wave spells over the country during January and February 2008 during 20th January to 2nd February and 7th—14th February.

During January & February 2008, the interval between passages of successive western disturbances across north India was rather long. This caused die intrusion of dry cold continental air from the mid latitude area over north India resulting into substantial drop in minimum temperature and humidity, giving rise to cold wave conditions with some stations recording lowest minimum temperatures on record.

The details of the subdivision wise cold wave conditions over northern India are listed in the enclosed Statement-I *(See* below). The details of stations recording lowest temperatures during die months of January and February are also shown in the the Statement-II *(See* below). This table also shows all time records for die minimum temperatures in these stations.

(d) to (f) The cold wave conditions do not figure in the enlisted hazard situations for which award of compensation can be granted.

Statement-I

Sub-division wise details of the duration of cold wave conditions during 2008 SI.

No.	Meteorological Sub-Divisions	Date/Duration
1.	Assam and Meghalaya	2-4- Feb
2.	Gangetic West Bengal & Orissa	15-16 Feb
3.	Jharkhand	1-2 Jan,28 Jan,2-3 Feb, ll-16Feb
4.	Bihar	1-2 Jan, 2-3 Feb, 14-15 Feb
5.	East Uttar Pradesh	1 Jan, 21 -22 Jan, 28 Jan, 1 -3 Feb, 12-15 Feb
6.	West Uttar Pradesh	21-23 Jan, 28 Jan, 1-2 Feb, 11-15 Feb
7.	Uttarakhand	21-26 Jan, 30 Jan-2 Feb, 13-14 Feb
8.	Haryana, Chandigarh & Delhi	1-4 Jan, 20-24 Jan, 26 Jan-2 Feb, 9-15 Feb
9.	Punjab	1 -3 Jan, 20 Jan, 2 Feb, 8-15 Feb
10.	Himachal Pradesh and Jammu and Kashmir	20-27 Jan, 30 Jan-2 Feb, 9-14 Feb
11.	West Rajasthan	21-27 Jan, 31 Jan, 7-14 Feb
12.	East Rajasthan	20-28 Jan, 31 Jan-1 Feb, 5-6 Feb, 8-14 Feb
13.	West Madhya Pradesh	21-25 Jan, 27 Jan-2 Feb, 4-6 Feb, 8-14 Feb
14.	East Madhya Pradesh	27-28 Jan, 1-2 Feb, 10-15 Feb
15.	Chhattisgarh	1-2 Feb, 11-16 Feb

Statement-II

Details of stations recording lowest temperatures during January & February

SI. No.	Station	2008 Observations		Previous Record	
		Minimum Temperature	Date/month	Previous record	Date of record
1.	Patiala	-0.9	24 January	0.0	17 Jan, 1962
2.	Ranchi	32	1 January	4.4	17 January 1974
3.	Jamshedpur	4.8	2 January	5.0	5 January 1963
4.	Kota	13	26 January	1.8	11 January 1967
5.	Naliya	0.4	7 February	2.5	7 February 1974
6.	Ranchi	3i	2 February	4.3	7 February 2008
7.	Kolhapur	8.8	9 February	93	13 February 1961
8.	Harnai	132	9 February	13.8	11 February 1950

Technology to forecast cloud-burst

3911. SHRIMATI VIPLOVE THAKUR: Will the Minister of EARTH SCIENCES be pleased to state:

whether Government is aware that every year a huge loss to life and property is caused in Himachal Pradesh due to cloud-bursts which lead to flash floods in different parts of the State;

if so, whether Government is working on the lines of development of a technology to forecast a cloud burst;

if so, the details thereof; and

if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF EARTH SCIENCES (SHRI KAPIL SIBAL): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) to (d) India Meteorological Department, as a part of its modernization programme, is considering to install a Doppler Weather Radar at Shimla and a network of Automatic Weather Stations in the region for monitoring cloud burst. These along with appropriate numerical weather forecasting models will help in forecasting the cloud bursts.

Declaring Sammakka-Saralamma jatara a National Festival

3912. SHRI GIREESH KUMAR SANGHI: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Sammakka-Saralamma Jatara is being held at Medaram, Warangal, Andhra Pradesh, annually and attracted 80 lakh devotees in the month of February, 2008 from all over the country;